

The American Observer

A free, virtuous, and enlightened people must know well the great principles and causes on which their happiness depends.—James Monroe

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Zest for Life

By Walter E. Myer

IN A recent issue of *This Week Magazine*, John Kieran gave some good advice to those who want to lead interesting lives. "Enthusiasm is the spice of life," he wrote. "An enthusiast . . . has never a dull moment . . ."

I can think of no one who is more qualified to write on this subject than John Kieran. A zest for living has always characterized him. His enthusiasm has led him to have an unusually rich and varied life.

For many years Kieran was a sports-writer on *The New York Times*. During the baseball season each year, he reported the activities of one of New York's big-league teams. Half of the time the team was playing in other cities. It was Kieran's job to go along and send back accounts of the games to the *Times*.

On such assignments, most sports-writers were accustomed to sleep late, eat a leisurely breakfast in the late morning, and head for the ball park about noon. Mr. Kieran, who had a lively interest in many other fields besides sports, felt that this morning routine represented an appalling waste of time.

Consequently, he arose early, ate breakfast, and spent the forenoon happily prowling about museums and other places of interest in the city.

Not only did Kieran have a wonderful time, but his early-morning activity later paid big dividends. He became one of the shining stars of the "Information Please" radio program, which met with big success during the 1930's. It was a quiz-type program, and listeners were amazed at the wide range of knowledge Kieran displayed in such varied fields as history, literature, sports, and nature. Today, the former sports-writer is a well-known author, thoroughly at home in many fields of learning. He is a "human encyclopedia."

Yet Kieran would never have accomplished all these things had he not been a person of such boundless enthusiasm. There is no more vital quality than that of enthusiasm as an aid to successful living. Basically it is no more or less than a keen and ardent interest in life.

So many people today seem to be completely lacking in this essential quality. They appear to be bored by everything that goes on about them. To them, life is a dreary, humdrum routine.

These people have never come to know how enthusiasm can brighten daily living. It is a quality that can be cultivated. One may nurture it by being constantly on the lookout for new interests and experiences, by browsing in various fields, by looking upon each new day as an opportunity for learning and exploration.

The best time to cultivate enthusiasm is when a person is young—before the feeling of boredom has had a chance to settle down upon one. So, do not be afraid to get excited about things. If you have the priceless quality of enthusiasm, life will hold greater rewards for you.



Walter E. Myer



KENNEDY FROM BLACK STAR
MEXICO CITY, the Mexican capital, has many fine, modern buildings

South of the Border

Mexico Strives to Become Modern Industrial Nation, but Low Living Standards Pose Big Problems

U.S. tourists visiting Mexico are getting a real break. The Mexican government recently changed the value of its money in a way that will help tourists. Formerly U.S. visitors received about eight pesos for a dollar. (The peso is Mexico's monetary unit.) Now they will receive almost twelve.

Thus, an American in Mexico City who wants to visit the Pacific resort of Acapulco may now travel by plane to that spot and back to the Mexican capital for the equivalent of \$13.20. Buying pesos at the old rate, he would have had to pay close to \$19. Before the devaluation, gasoline cost U.S. tourists about 23 cents a gallon; now it is 16 cents.

On some of the things that tourists buy, prices have been boosted. This may offset the advantages they would have gained through the change in value of the peso. Nevertheless, the Mexican government is doing its best to keep prices from skyrocketing. One of its aims in devaluing the peso was to attract tourists to Mexico. In recent years, the tourist trade has been that country's biggest dollar-earning industry.

U.S. vacationists who drive down one of the four fine highways that today connect Mexico City and our border will find the country to the

south of us a colorful, scenic land. In the rural regions they will often see adobe huts and Indian dwellings made of plaited reeds. Patches of corn make green splashes on the hillsides.

Along the roads, children herd flocks of sheep with perhaps a few goats and burros thrown in for good measure. Here and there in the distance, jagged mountain ranges may be seen. This is the old Mexico that has existed for centuries.

On the other hand, in some of Mexico's cities, travelers will see skyscrapers and supermarkets, factories of modern design, and neat homes for workers. Shiny automobiles purr down the boulevards. All kinds of goods may be seen behind the plate glass of shop windows. This is the new Mexico that has been coming into existence during recent years.

How strong and prosperous a nation Mexico will become depends on many things. Certainly she is not so well off in some ways as most industrial lands. The northern part of the country is largely desert. Central Mexico is a vast plateau, hemmed in by mountain ranges. Along the Pacific and the Gulf of Mexico are narrow bands of tropical lowlands. Since these regions have been considered unhealthy, most of

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Dust Problem on the Great Plains

Dry Weather and Strong Winds Bring Intensive Damage to a Five-State Region

DESPITE the Great Plains drought that is receiving so much publicity, our country doesn't face a grain shortage in the near future. Big surpluses have been piled up from previous years, and—besides—farmers in many parts of the Midwest expect fairly good yields of wheat and other crops this spring and summer.

Even so, the drought brings a serious problem for the nation as a whole—and still a worse one for the regions actually in its grip. It slashes the farmers' incomes. It hurts the merchants and businessmen with whom these farmers trade. In hard-hit sections of our country, it causes soil damage which can be repaired only through a long period of good rainfall. The United States has plenty of rich soil, but still this nation can't easily afford the great scars which severe droughts sometimes inflict upon its farmland.

Recent dry weather has extended through many parts of America. Weather maps show large areas on the East Coast, in the Gulf States, and in the West, which received far less than their normal amount of rain last winter. The mayor of New York City has ordered a strict water-conservation program, because the city's reservoirs have been considerably below their usual level for this season of the year.

So far as agriculture is concerned, the worst trouble is in the eastern parts of Colorado and New Mexico, the western portions of Kansas and Oklahoma, and the northwestern or "Panhandle" section of Texas. The situation in these Great Plains states isn't something that has just developed over the last few months.

In regions where the drought is worst, there hasn't been a normal amount of rain for several years. Heavy winds have now come sweeping across the dry ground, stirring up huge dust storms—"black blizzards" that throw their grimy haze far beyond those areas from which the soil is actually blowing.

The most seriously stricken areas today are in the same general region which suffered a long and severe drought about 20 years ago. During that earlier period, this section acquired an unwanted name—"the Dust Bowl"—and some observers are applying the term once again. For instance, a newspaper in the nation's capital recently carried this headline: "A New Dust Bowl Has Begun on the Plains."

Many people who live in the drought areas, however, don't like the use of such catch-phrases. They say: "It

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Progress in Mexico

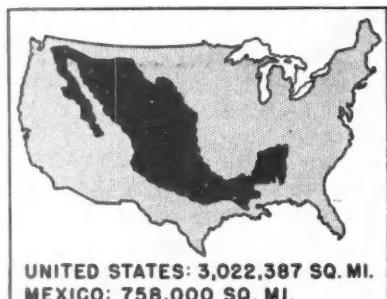
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Mexico's 26 million people live in the plateau region.

About a tenth of the Mexicans are descendants of Spaniards who once ruled Mexico as a colony of Spain. Nearly a third are Indians. Most of the rest are of mixed race. Spanish is the language of most people, but many Indian tongues are also heard. English is widely taught in the schools, beginning about the sixth grade.

Mexico's mineral wealth is likely to loom large in her attempt to become a strong industrial nation. She mines and sells silver, gold, lead, zinc, and copper. She has enough coal and iron for use in her own factories. In addition, she is one of the big oil-producing nations.

Since World War II, Mexico—about one fourth the size of the United States—has shot ahead by leaps and bounds. President Miguel Aleman, who was his country's chief executive from 1946 to 1952, pushed the growth



DRAWN FOR THE AMERICAN OBSERVER BY JOHNSON

of industry. During his regime, the output of electricity was nearly doubled, and close to 2½ million acres of dry land was put under irrigation. Important railway lines were modernized.

An American businessman returning from Mexico says: "The country is alive with activity these days. Gone is the feeling of 'let's do it tomorrow.' The din of a 'let's do it now' program can be heard across the land."

Until quite recently, Mexico's leading industries have been those which prepare her wheat, cotton, sugar, tobacco, coffee, leather, and sisal (used for twine) for market. Of growing importance now are the factories that turn out such varied items as steel, cement, glass, paper, and automobile supplies.

New industries are opening their doors in many parts of the country. First-class highways are being built to help speed factory goods to markets. The nation is advancing so rapidly that it is stepping ahead of other Western Hemisphere nations below the Rio Grande as a manufacturing center.

Mexico sells large amounts of her raw materials to the United States and other nations. Besides the silver and other minerals it exports, that country sells tropical fruits, valuable hardwoods, and richly decorated hand-made articles. Its major purchases from other lands include wheat, machinery, vehicles, and other iron and steel products.

Our neighbor's progress in the past few years is impressive. Yet it cannot obscure the fact that she is faced with grave problems of many kinds.

Lagging farm output. Mexico is not producing enough food to feed its people. Lack of good land is at the root of this situation. So much of the

country consists of mountains, deserts, and jungles that only about seven per cent of Mexico is fit for cultivation. Irrigation probably could not boost the arable land to more than 12 per cent of the country's area.

Under these circumstances, the Mexican government has a tough task on its hands to boost crop yields. The nation needs seven times the wheat it now raises. It is producing only about 75 per cent of the corn it requires. Since the tortilla, a corn-meal "pancake," is a basic food item in the average Mexican family, the government has to buy large amounts of corn elsewhere.

President Adolfo Ruiz Cortines considers low farm output the most serious problem his government faces. He has set aside more than 116 million dollars for agricultural development. He is trying to increase the amount of arable land through irrigation, and is encouraging the use of modern farming methods to boost crop yield. The government is planning to transfer thousands of farm families from unproductive areas to the fertile but underpopulated regions along both coasts.

Low income. A study made for the Mexican Congress last year showed that almost 4½ million Mexicans earn less than \$24 a month. About 86 per cent of the population make less than \$35 a month. Only 91,000 citizens earn more than \$115 monthly.

The only satisfactory solution of this problem seems to be to increase the production and sale of goods and thus provide more and better jobs. Many of the programs that the Mexican government has undertaken in recent years have these long-range objectives in mind. It is not a problem that can be solved overnight. Meanwhile, the industrial progress now under way is threatened by the fact that not enough people can afford to buy the goods which Mexico's new factories are turning out.

The low incomes that Mexican laborers receive has created a troublesome problem for the U. S. government. Each year hundreds of thousands of Mexican workers, attracted by high wages in the U. S., head north to seek jobs as farm laborers in this country.

Some of the laborers are admitted temporarily as migratory farm workers under an agreement with the Mexi-



TEEN-AGERS in Mexico at a party. Mexican young people are fond of singing.

can government. Only a limited number, though, are permitted to come in. Large numbers of others enter illegally. They are known as "wetbacks" since many of them swim the Rio Grande River, separating Mexico and Texas, to escape the border patrols of the U. S. Immigration Service.

This illegal activity has created many difficulties for our country. The Mexican government deplores it, but finds it as difficult to control as we do. A few weeks ago the two governments entered into a new agreement to govern the entrance of farm workers. This is expected to curb the illegal entry better than it has been done in the past. But the real solution—so far as the Mexican government is concerned—is to provide more and better jobs for its people. Then they will not have the reason to seek jobs here in such large numbers.

Poor living conditions. With food production lagging and incomes low, it follows that millions of Mexicans lack adequate food, shelter, and clothing. For approximately half the population, tortillas are the main item of diet—and about the only one. Almost half of Mexico's dwellings are of baked mud. Even in Mexico City, where glittering skyscrapers are going up, more than one third of the dwellings are shacks.

Diseases take many lives. About one out of every ten babies dies at birth. Those who survive may expect, on an average, to live about 40 years. Mex-

ico has about one doctor for every 3,000 people as compared to one for every 750 in the United States. Hospitals are being built and clinics are being set up, but progress is slow.

Close to 40 per cent of the population cannot read or write. This figure is much lower, though, than it was a few years ago. Grade-school education is now compulsory, but actually there are not enough schools to accommodate all children. The government is tackling the problem in an earnest way, and has set up some 10,000 centers where adults may learn to read and write.

The inflation which Mexico has suffered since World War II has been especially hard on the average Mexican family. Living costs today are some four times higher than they were in 1939. Wages have gone up, too, but nowhere near as much as prices.

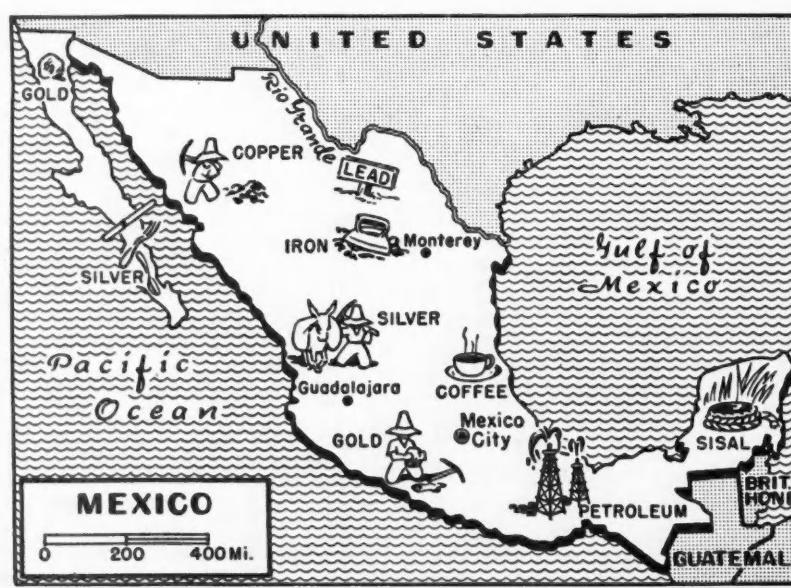
The Cortines government has been making a big effort to keep living costs from rising further. It has acted quickly against food speculators, and has placed price controls on some basic foods. It has even gone into the food business itself by making bread and selling it at low prices.

More Inflation?

For some time the present administration did a good job of checking inflation, but the recent change in the value of the peso is causing much concern among the common people of Mexico. While the tourist can get more pesos with a dollar than he could before, the peso cannot buy quite so much as it could before it was cheapened, so the average Mexican's purchasing power is even less than it was.

The government hopes that prices will not rise greatly. After the devaluation took place last month, some prices—especially of luxury products—shot up rapidly, but it is thought that they may settle back a bit as time goes on. In making its decision to alter the peso's value, the government apparently felt that the stimulation which would be given to the tourist business would, in the long run, be of great benefit to the country, and would more than make up for the temporary hardship caused by rising prices. The next few months will determine the wisdom of this decision.

The Mexican government wants to get hold of as many dollars from tourists as possible, so it can purchase U. S. machinery and other products which it needs.



MEXICO, our neighbor to the south, is about one fourth as large as the U. S.

The Story of the Week

Mexico's President

An American newsman, who recently interviewed Mexico's President Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, had this to say: Mexico is indeed fortunate in having a man like Ruiz Cortines at its helm during this period. He appears to be well qualified to tackle his country's many problems (see page 1 story).

Born 62 years ago in the Mexican state of Veracruz, the only son of a customhouse agent, Ruiz Cortines studied accountancy as a youth. For several years he worked in the office of an importing firm. He soon became tired of that kind of life, and longed to enter politics.

His first political activity began in the early years of this century, when he took an active part in the revolu-



ADOLFO RUIZ CORTINES
Mexican President

tions then shaking Mexico. Later, he was appointed to his first public office—as a clerk in the Bureau of Statistics. After that he held increasingly important government jobs. He was governor of his native state of Veracruz, and later served as Secretary of the Interior under his predecessor as president, Miguel Aleman. In 1952, Ruiz Cortines began his six-year term of office as Mexico's chief.

Ruiz Cortines is a quiet man who avoids personal publicity and the gay life traditional for Mexican politicos. He has not made himself wealthy in public office as have many of his countrymen in the past. One of his oft-repeated slogans is "I was poor as a boy, and I still am." His honesty, even his political opponents admit, is above question.

An Eisenhower Victory

Many provisions of the Eisenhower administration's farm program are now up for action by Congress. The administration's proposals, which include measures to reduce government aid to certain farmers, are running into stiff opposition from some Senate and House members of both parties.

Meanwhile, the President and his supporters won a victory in the Senate on an administration proposal having to do with wool. Among the chief provisions of the Senate-passed measure are these:

1. The elimination of existing government "price supports" on wool. (Under this program, Uncle Sam buys wool from farmers who cannot sell it profitably on the regular markets.)

2. Government subsidies, or aid, to

wool growers. This would require the government to make up the difference between regular market prices for wool, and what producers get for it under existing "price supports." Uncle Sam would not buy any wool, however, as he now does.

Administration supporters say the Senate bill would put an end to the government "wool-buying spree," while helping to prevent hardships to farmers because of falling wool prices. Critics argue that the measure provides a "handout" of government funds to a small group of Americans.

The final Senate vote on the wool bill was, 40 Republicans and 29 Democrats *for*; 4 Republicans and 13 Democrats *against*.

Hearings Go On

In the sensational Army-Cohn-McCarthy hearings which have occupied so much attention since they began on April 22, there have been two juries listening to the evidence and waiting to make a decision. One is the Senate subcommittee which is holding the hearings; the other is the American people as a whole. The general public will form an opinion not only of the conflicting parties in this controversy, but also of the verdict reached by the Senate committee.

By way of review, a chief Army charge in this dispute is that McCarthy and members of his staff, particularly Roy Cohn, used threats against Army officials in an effort to get special privileges for their former co-worker, Private David Schine. The McCarthy side claims the Army used Schine as a "hostage" in an effort to put a halt to the committee's investigation of that branch of the service.

Parties Look to Youth

Every year, an estimated 2 million young Americans become eligible to vote. Both the Democrats and the Republicans are now making special efforts to get these new voters to go to the polls in this fall's congressional, state, and local elections. Each party, of course, is also trying to win the young citizens over to its side.



AND NOW, FLOATING SUITS. The four girls are demonstrating a new swimming garment. The suits have built-in front panels that trap air and make it possible for the wearers to float idly and safely on a hot summer day.

Both major parties have youth groups which try to get persons who are 18 years of age or older to take part in political affairs. Their organizations—the Young Democrats and the Young Republicans—now claim a combined membership of some 800,000 young people. Both groups plan to hold nation-wide meetings later this year to draw up campaign plans for next fall.

Up to Geneva?

The United States is doing everything possible, short of going to war, in its efforts to help beleaguered French forces fighting communist rebels in Indochina. Last week, it appeared that our government would wait for news from Geneva, Switzerland, before carrying out any new plan of action regarding southeast Asia. In Geneva, we and our allies began discussions on Asian problems with Russia and her Red supporters two weeks ago.

Uncle Sam undoubtedly has a number of alternative policies ready to be put into effect if no final agreement on the Indochinese and other

Asian problems can be reached in the Swiss city. These policies, of course are not known at this time.

Meanwhile, some of the chief questions that have been before the Geneva meeting are: (1) How can a permanent peace settlement be made for Korea? (2) Under what conditions can the fighting be ended in Indochina? (3) How can other Asian problems, such as the future of Indochina, be settled?

Around the Globe

President Eisenhower has signed a measure providing for federal aid to the states for building and repairing important highways. The new law sets aside nearly a billion dollars for this purpose.

A bill passed by the House provides for the following defense budget: More than 7½ billion dollars for the Army, over 9½ billion for the Navy, and nearly 11 billion for the Air Force. The lawmakers cut more than a billion dollars from the armed forces budget requested by President Eisenhower. The defense measure, which was adopted unanimously by the House, has gone to the Senate for action.

Argentina's President Juan Peron ordered police to seize a number of opposition political leaders immediately after parliamentary elections were held in the South American land a short time ago. Some observers believe that Peron acted against opposition leaders because their parties polled a surprisingly heavy vote in the recent balloting.

Next Saturday, May 15, is Armed Forces Day. On that date, our nation's Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps will be on parade. People living in cities across the nation can see, next Saturday, some of the men and equipment which make up our first line of defense against possible enemies.

The U. S. Air Force school to train officers of our air arm is scheduled to begin classes this summer in temporary buildings. The new academy, headed by Brigadier General Don Zimmerman, is expected to have at least one structure of its own ready by next year.

Uncle Sam has promised to provide



COBALT in a bomb could destroy almost all life on the earth, scientists say. But the metal also can do much to ease human suffering. The machine above, worth \$250,000, uses cobalt for treating cancer. It is installed in the new, modern Lankenau Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

military aid to Iraq. American military teams are now being sent to the Middle Eastern land to determine what kind of equipment is most needed by that country. Aid to Iraq will bring the total number of nations receiving military assistance from us to 29. These include Iraq's neighbors—Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan.

The Federation of American Scientists, a nation-wide organization of scientists and engineers, wants President Eisenhower to set up a special group to investigate charges that disloyalty exists at New Jersey's Fort Monmouth—an Army radar and communications center. The scientific group maintains that past "unproven" charges of disloyalty at the fort, made by Senator McCarthy's Senate investigating committee last year, have "shattered the morale of loyal workers at the base."

Next Thursday, May 13, the United States, Britain, France, Russia, and other countries are scheduled to resume disarmament talks in London.

The National Labor Relations Board—a government agency that handles labor matters—has set May 26 as the deadline for special elections among the New York City area dockworkers. The vote is to decide whether the American Federation of Labor or the International Longshoreman's Association (ILA) is to act as union representative for the waterfront workers. AFL has accused ILA of doing nothing to put down graft and corruption among its leaders.

Librarian of Congress

Lawrence Mumford is scheduled to take over his duties soon as Librarian of Congress. He was appointed to that post a short time ago by President Eisenhower, and, as of this writing, must still be approved by the Senate.

A native of North Carolina, 50-year-old Mumford has been doing library work ever since he finished his schooling in 1929. He has held posts in New York City and Cleveland libraries. For the past four years, he has served as head of the Cleveland Public Library.

As director of the Library of Congress, Mumford will be in charge of one of the most complete libraries in



"THE PICKWICK PAPERS" is a movie from the famous Charles Dickens story

the world. It contains more than 31 million books, pamphlets, musical scores, and other items. Every year a great assortment of material from all corners of the nation, as well as from other countries, is added to the library's collections.

As its name implies, the Library of Congress is an information center for the nation's lawmakers. A special Legislative Reference Service engages in research work for Capitol Hill. In addition, the library is open, free of charge, to the public. Visitors can enjoy its many exhibits, and persons who want to go there to study will find the reference librarians very helpful in locating books and in explaining how the library operates.

Dickens Movie

Mr. Pickwick and all his delightful friends, as created by Charles Dickens, are on hand to entertain you in an English film, "The Pickwick Papers." The sets, the costumes, and the mannerisms of Dickens' characters seem to be lifted from the author's novel and brought to life on the screen.

Dickens' "Pickwick Papers," as we know, is a sarcastic, but humorous tale

of life in 19th century England as he saw it. He tells of the adventures of a few Pickwick Club members who start off on a tour of England to gain more knowledge of their country. They get involved in one hilarious scrape after another when they meet the "charming rascal," Mr. Jingle, during their travels.

The part of the blustering, pudgy Mr. Pickwick is played by James Hayter. Nigel Patrick takes the role of the jolly scoundrel, Mr. Jingle. A large cast of other noted British players bring many more Dickens characters to life in the film.

Viet Minh Takes Over

Laos, Viet Nam, and Cambodia, as we know, are partly independent, French-supervised lands of Indochina. Some months ago, the Viet Minh, or communist rebel forces in Indochina, took over a province of Laos called Sam Neua. Recently, a farmer who once lived in Sam Neua under the Reds fled to the anti-communist side. He describes life under the Viet Minh as follows:

Soon after the communists took over Sam Neua, they rounded up all the people they could find. Some were accused of not cooperating with the Reds. These were put to work in jungle camps cutting trees. Except when actually working, the prisoners were tied together with ropes. At night, they slept bound hand and foot.

Persons not sent to prison were also required to work—men, women, and children alike. They were organized into small bands, with a Red leader at the head of each group, and were given assigned tasks to perform. Under the Viet Minh propaganda program, all persons were forced to attend special communist lectures.

Informers were everywhere. Even those persons who accepted communism were watched by Red agents. Mob trials were held for persons accused of anti-Viet Minh activities.

Next Week's Articles

Unless unforeseen developments arise, next week's major articles will deal with (1) the influence of comic books, movies, and TV programs on young people of today, and (2) Japan.

Study Guide

Drought Problem

1. In what five states is dry weather now causing farmers the most trouble?
2. Why do many residents of the drought area object to the use of such terms as "Dust Bowl"?
3. What happened, beginning at about the time of World War I, that made more severe the effects of drought during the 1930's?
4. Explain why the Great Plains wasn't well prepared to meet the present period of dry weather.
5. Financially, why is the plains region in a better position to "weather the storm" now than in the 1930's?
6. How are farmers now fighting the dust storms?
7. Describe some long-range measures that might be taken in preparation for future droughts.

Discussion

In your opinion, is the problem of droughts and dust storms mainly one for the farmers in the affected areas, or is it a truly national problem? Explain your position.

Mexico

1. How has the recent devaluation of the peso in Mexico affected U. S. tourists?
2. In what ways has Mexico changed in recent years?
3. Why is farm output lagging there?
4. What steps are being taken to remedy this matter?
5. How has the low income of Mexican workers created a problem for the U. S. government?
6. What problems does the Mexican government face in trying to raise living standards?
7. Why is devaluation of the peso causing concern among the Mexican people?

Discussion

1. Which of the problems confronting Mexico do you feel most needs a speedy solution? Explain.
2. Do you think that a strong and prosperous Mexico is important to our own welfare in the United States? Why or why not?

Miscellaneous

1. What position is held by Adolfo Ruiz Cortines?
2. In what ways would an Eisenhower-supported bill, passed by the Senate, change the government's policies on wool?
3. What is the combined membership of the Young Democrats and the Young Republicans? What are these groups striving to do?
4. Why does the Federation of American Scientists want the President to study charges of disloyalty at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey?

5. Who is Lawrence Mumford, and why is he in the news?
6. According to a refugee from communist Viet Minh, how are people there treated by the Reds?

Pronunciations

- Acapulco—ä'kä-poo'lkö
Adolfo Ruiz Cortines—ä-dawl'fö röö-ës'-core-tee'nës
Juan Peron—hwän pé-rawn'
Pancho Villa—pän'chö vë'yä
Peso—pay'so
Porfirio Diaz—pawr-fë'ryö dë'äs
Veracruz—vä'rä-kröz'

Answers to Your Vocabulary

1. (a) increase; 2. (c) flattery; 3. (b) small quantity; 4. (a) ragamuffin; 5. (d) group of three rulers; 6. (a) haughty; 7. (b) boldness.

THE LIGHTER SIDE

It isn't always clear what our role in the international picture is, but the part being played by our "roll" is pretty obvious.

"Did you tell Binks that I'm a fool?"
"No. I thought he already knew it."



"I'll try to be as brief as possible, Mr. Denton. No."

Little boy (on a transcontinental train): "Mama, what's the name of the last station we stopped at?"

Mother: "Don't bother me. Can't you see I'm reading. Why do you ask?"

Little boy: "Because sister got off there."

*

Merchant (to young applicant for a job): "Sorry, we hire only married men."

Applicant: "Do you happen to have a daughter?"

*

Two Germans were fishing on the opposite sides of a river separating the American occupation zone from the Russian zone. The fellow on the American side seemed to be having all the luck and was pulling in one fish after another.

Becoming impatient, the fisherman on the Russian side shouted to the other one and asked him why he was doing so well.

"That's simple," replied the lucky one. "The fish over here are not afraid to open their mouths."

*

A wise husband will buy his wife such fine china that she won't trust him to wash the dishes.

Drought, Wind, Dust

(Concluded from page 1)

will give our part of the country a bad reputation. We are merely going through a temporary setback. We don't want people in other sections to form the impression that the southern Great Plains is a desert land."

Observers familiar with the bountiful supplies of grain and livestock that come from this region in favorable years are in no danger of getting such an idea. Farm experts know that the Great Plains drought area has a promising future despite its bleak appearance today, and they are already discussing the means by which later droughts can possibly be kept from doing so much damage.

People familiar with the Great Plains region know that its weather generally goes in cycles—with periods of sufficient moisture followed by periods of dry weather. What the farmers do, as a group, during the comparatively moist years can have a direct bearing on how well they pull through a drought later.

World War I

It is generally agreed, for example, that the effects of drought in the 1930's were made more severe by the extensive plowing and cultivating that had been done on the Great Plains before that time. World War I marked the beginning of a tremendous wheat-raising boom. Heavy demand for grain during that conflict sent prices skyrocketing. Farmers plowed up millions of acres of grass in the belt of land just east of the Rockies, and planted wheat.

Modern machinery increased the amount of land that each farmer could tend. The tractor was just then coming into use on farms. The harvester-thresher, or combine, appeared about 1920.

All during the 1920's, farmers continued tearing up the prairie sod. Some of the land they plowed was in regions where the average rainfall is extremely light. So long as the weather is favorable, such ground produces fine crops of grain, but in dry periods it is suitable mainly for grass. During such periods, the soil needs grass for protection against the wind. But when the weather turned dry, shortly after 1930, the plowed land

didn't have enough vegetation to hold the topsoil in place.

Heavy spring winds were able to stir up "black blizzards" from the dry, dusty earth. In some cases the storm could sweep ahead for miles and miles, unbroken by any obstacle of grassland across its path.

After several years of such conditions, moist weather returned to the plains. At about the same time, World War II began and there developed a greater demand for wheat and other farm products than ever before. Prices of these items went sky high, and the federal government encouraged farmers to raise all the grain they could.

As a result, precautions against the next siege of drought were in some cases neglected—such precautions as leaving strips of grassland across the path of the prevailing winds. This failure—especially during the war years—was not the farmers' fault. In the early and middle 1940's, they would have been sharply criticized if they had *not* devoted practically all their efforts to raising food crops.

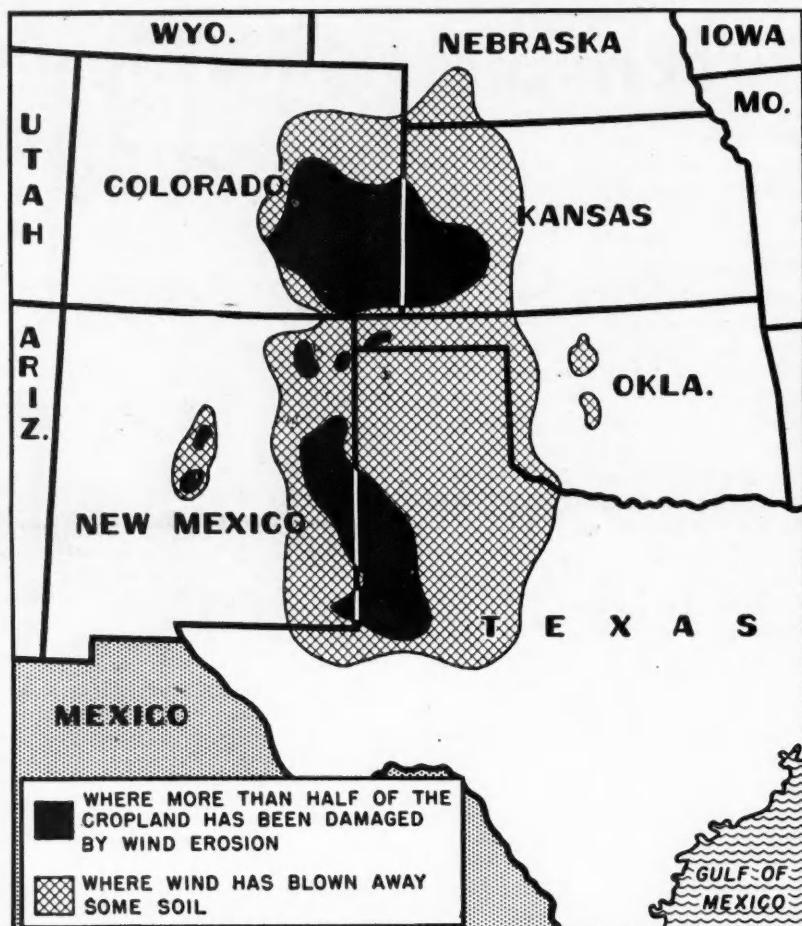
Nevertheless, when drought returned in the early 1950's, the Great Plains wasn't well prepared to meet it. By this time, far more land had been plowed than in the 1930's. Two adjoining counties in eastern Colorado, for instance, had a total of only 312,000 acres under cultivation in 1930 as compared to 950,000 acres in 1953.

In many areas, too, the farmers had sought to raise far more cattle than their pastures could safely support. These cattle ate the grass away to such an extent that it was in poor shape to withstand drought and protect the land against blowing.

"The Worst"

Recent wind erosion on the Great Plains, according to soil conservation experts, has severely damaged approximately enough land to fill the state of Connecticut—and has done much harm to a still larger area. Various responsible news organizations, including the *Associated Press*, refer to the present drought situation as the worst in U. S. history.

Nevertheless, economic conditions in the hardest-hit area are not so bad now as they were during the drought



DRAWN FOR THE AMERICAN OBSERVER BY JOHNSON
IN THE REGIONS SHOWN, valuable soil has been blown away by the wind

of the 1930's. The earlier dry spell struck while the nation was still feeling the effects of a great depression, during which the farmers had received pitifully low prices for their grain and livestock. The present drought began after a long period of bountiful crops, sold at high prices. While it is true that many farmers are extremely hard-pressed, the Great Plains area as a whole is better equipped financially to weather the storm now than it was 20 years ago.

Besides, the farmers today know considerably more about fighting the dust storms than they did in the 1930's. In many areas they are "listing" and "chiseling" the soil to reduce or prevent wind erosion. This means that they go through the fields with implements which leave a rough, cloddy surface. Ground in this condition resists blowing far better than if it were smooth.

Fighting the dust is a cooperative job. If one farmer leaves his fields in bad shape, the dust which blows from them can "sand-blast" his neighbors' land and start it blowing too. In Colorado, if a piece of land needs listing or chiseling and the owner neglects to take care of it, the county government can hire the job done and tax the landowner for its cost.

Late last month, the governors of Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas met with President Eisenhower and other U. S. officials to discuss drought problems. They asked for 15 million dollars in federal emergency funds to help their states fight the dust storms.

Various observers ask: "Why don't the Great Plains people try some of the modern rain-making methods that science has developed?" The answer is that rain-making succeeds only when there is considerable moisture in the atmosphere. For a long time in the Great Plains region, the air has been dry, like the soil.

The steps now being taken, in the areas of worst drought, are emergency measures. There is other action that

can be carried out when the next period of rainy years begins, in an effort to lessen the effects of such droughts as may occur still later.

In the first place, farmers are being urged to restore the grass on sizable stretches of damaged land—as soon as there is enough moisture to permit its growth. Certain conservation experts believe that about 8 million acres should be thus "retired" from cultivation. Such an area, in total, would be larger than Maryland.

For land that is kept in cultivation, producing wheat and similar crops, there are methods of farming so as to conserve all possible moisture in the ground. If these methods are followed during wet years, the soil stores up water so that it can endure dry periods reasonably well.

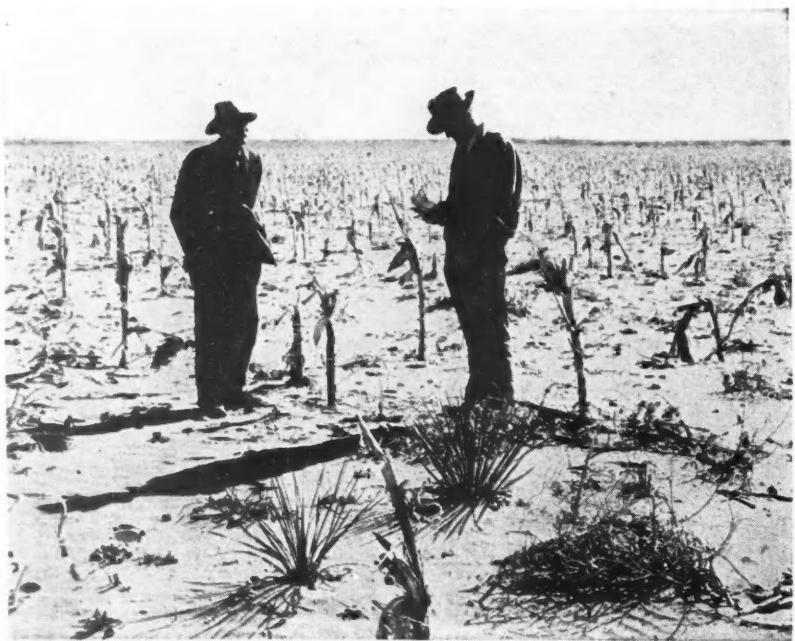
Stubble Mulch

Also, in regions where wind erosion is a constant threat, the farmers often do what is known as "stubble mulching" or "trash farming." That is, they use a type of plow which leaves the trash and stubble on top of the ground as protection against heavy winds.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with local officials, has sought to promote such practices. Many people argue, though, that the federal soil conservation program receives far too little emphasis and attention. They think much more should be done along this line.

Meanwhile, it is encouraging that numerous Great Plains farmers have been following sound conservation policies. If they had not been doing so, the effects of the present drought would probably be much worse than they are now.

Naturally, if a drought lasts long enough it will cause crop failures, sear the pastures, and bring dust storms—no matter how carefully the ground has been tended. Agricultural experts hope, however, that further progress in farming methods will eventually put the Great Plains in better shape to withstand future droughts.



THIS RUINED FIELD OF CORN gives an idea of the damage that may be caused when winds carry away top layers of soil on farms

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

Careers for Tomorrow - - - In the Field of Statistics

STATISTICIANS are the men and women who collect numerical data or facts, analyze them, and draw conclusions from the material. Their work affects the lives of all of us.

When we pay the electric bill, for instance, we pay at prices that have been set up as a result of a statistician's work. When we drive a car, we are using a piece of equipment that was designed and manufactured on the basis of hundreds of different statistical tests.

Your duties, if you decide to become a statistician, will vary. Most statistical work is based on what is known as a *sampling technique*; that is, a few items of a given kind are studied as a basis for drawing conclusions about an entire group.

The *public opinion polls* are an example of the sampling technique. In these, a limited number of people, carefully selected to represent the population as a whole, are asked a question based on a topic of general interest. By applying various statistical formulas and procedures to the answers that are received, statisticians can reach some conclusions as to how the public feels in regard to certain questions.

Statisticians perform many other tasks. For example, they work out tests whereby a manufacturer can tell whether or not his product is up to standard. They also deal with vital statistics—information relating to births, deaths, and diseases.

Your qualifications should include an inquiring mind, imagination, the ability to express yourself well in writing, and, of course, a high degree



A STATISTICIAN, to be successful, must like and understand mathematics

of mathematical ability. An inquisitive mind is necessary if the statistician is to track down the facts which have real significance. Imagination is needed in arranging the statistical data and finding ways to bring out their meaning. The need for the other qualities is obvious.

Your training should include a college preparatory course in high school, with emphasis on mathematics and English. When you go to college for your A.B. degree, you should take advanced mathematics, including courses in statistics. You should also study subjects related to the particular field in which you want to specialize—money and banking, if you want to work in finance; sociology and econo-

mics, if you want to work in social welfare; and so on.

If you want to get ahead, an M.A. or Ph.D. is almost a necessity. One or two years are required to get an M.A., and three or four for the Ph.D.

Your income as a beginner, if you have only an A.B. degree, may be about \$2,500 a year. Those who have Ph.D.'s start out with yearly salaries of about \$5,000 or \$6,000. Earnings of experienced persons generally are good and range from \$5,000 to \$20,000 or more a year.

Advantages and disadvantages that you might encounter will depend chiefly upon your abilities and interests. If you like mathematics and want to go to school long enough to

get an advanced degree, you can look forward to good salaries, work in a field that is not overcrowded, and almost unlimited opportunities for professional development. If you do not like mathematics, or are irritated at having to handle figures day in and day out, statistics offers you few vocational advantages.

While only about a fourth of the professional statisticians at work today are women, opportunities for them are as good as they are for men.

Further information and a pamphlet entitled "Statistics as a Career," can be secured from the American Statistical Association, 1108 16th Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C. The pamphlet costs 25 cents. An occupational brief, entitled "The Outlook for Women in Mathematics and Statistics," Women's Bureau Bulletin 223-4, is available for 10 cents in coin from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C.

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"Is Dust Bowl Coming Back?" U.S. News & World Report, March 5, 1954.

"Dust Bowl Danger Zone," Newsweek, March 8, 1954.

"Mexico on the March," by Michael Scully, The Reader's Digest, November 1953.

"Hungry Workers, Ripe Crops, and the Nonexistent Mexican Border," by Richard P. Eckels, The Reporter, April 13, 1954.

NOTE TO TEACHERS: Cut along this line if you wish to save the test for later use. This test covers the issues of January 25 to May 3, inclusive. The answer key appears in the May 10 issue of THE CIVIC LEADER. **Scoring:** If grades are to be calculated on a percentage basis, we suggest that a deduction of 2 points be made for each wrong or omitted answer.

The American Observer Semester Test

I. Newsmakers. For each of the following items, find the picture of the person identified and place the number of that picture on your answer sheet. (There is one picture for which there is no numbered item.)

1. Senator from Nevada.
2. Radio and TV news commentator.
3. U. S. Attorney General.
4. Ruler of Viet Nam.
5. Assistant to President Eisenhower.
6. British Foreign Secretary.
7. Senator from Ohio.
8. Russian Foreign Minister.

II. Multiple Choice. In each of the following items, select the correct answer and write its letter on your answer sheet.

9. Our big aim in the Geneva Conference is to (a) restore Chiang Kai-shek to power in China; (b) stop communist aggression in the Far East; (c) urge Red China to join the United Nations; (d) restore Japanese control over the Korean peninsula.

10. The ANZUS Pact links three democratic nations interested in maintaining

peace in the (a) Southwest Pacific area; (b) North Atlantic area; (c) Middle East area; (d) Western Hemisphere.

11. Argument over control of the Suez Canal threatens to weaken the defenses against communism in (a) the Western Hemisphere; (b) the Middle East; (c) Southeast Asia; (d) the Scandinavian Peninsula.

12. A major part of the Puerto Rican government's program to raise living standards emphasizes the island's need for (a) becoming a state in our Union; (b) attaining political independence; (c) a larger population; (d) more good housing.

13. When a witness uses the Fifth Amendment to avoid answering the questions of a congressional committee, he (a) loses his rights as a citizen; (b) admits that he is a communist; (c) places a tremendous amount of suspicion upon himself; (d) must be fired regardless of where he works.

14. U. S. government leaders believe that if free elections are held in both East and West Germany, the result will be a victory for (a) Russian-controlled communists; (b) the new fascist movement; (c) the forces of democracy; (d) the old Nazi Party.

15. The largest source of funds to op-

erate the federal government is (a) corporation income taxes; (b) excise taxes; (c) individual income taxes; (d) customs.

16. The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway would be of greatest benefit to the U. S. ports of (a) Boston and New York; (b) Philadelphia and Baltimore; (c) New Orleans and San Francisco; (d) Chicago and Detroit.

17. A strong argument of those who support pay increases for judges and congressmen is that (a) higher pay is needed to attract able people to these posts; (b) the government can easily afford to pay higher salaries; (c) government salaries should be higher than any paid in private industry; (d) government officials must dress and live better than other people.

18. Communist China receives from the United States (a) no goods at all; (b) only strategic war supplies; (c) only non-strategic materials; (d) unlimited supplies of all kinds of goods.

19. For many years Turkey and Russia have disagreed over control of the (a) Aegean Sea; (b) Dardanelles; (c) Suez Canal; (d) Straits of Gibraltar.

20. The main dispute about congressional investigations centers upon (a) whether or not they are legal; (b) their

influence in shaping U. S. foreign policy; (c) their monetary cost to U. S. taxpayers; (d) how they should be conducted.

21. Which of the following statements is true about Africa: (a) Africa's industries are highly developed and her people very prosperous. (b) Africa will always be a poor and backward area. (c) European nations with African colonies are trying to promote the economic development of the continent. (d) European nations are trying to get rid of their African colonies.

22. The European nation that has granted the greatest amount of self-rule to its African colonies is (a) Great Britain; (b) France; (c) Portugal; (d) Belgium.

23. The industrial development of Australia may receive a big boost as a result of recent discoveries of (a) iron ore and coal; (b) oil and uranium; (c) asphalt and gold; (d) copper and cobalt.

24. President Eisenhower has asked Congress to set aside more than 40 billion dollars next year for (a) foreign aid; (b) social security payments; (c) defense; (d) federal highway construction and subsidies to transportation companies.

(Concluded on page 8)



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Historical Backgrounds

Our Relations with Mexico

MEXICO (see page 1 story) has a 2,000-mile frontier with the United States. Despite this, many U.S. citizens know very little about our southern neighbor. Differences in language and history have contributed to the lack of knowledge.

When Spanish explorers came to America in the 16th century, they found highly civilized Indian tribes in Mexico. The Spanish conquered the Aztecs, who were the most powerful Indians. Thereafter, Spain ruled Mexico as a colony for 300 years.

Spanish became the leading language in Mexico. Spanish customs were adopted. The United States, on the other hand, developed as an English-speaking nation. We established rather close relations with Canada, whose historical background was similar to ours. But we were slow to build ties with Mexico.

Mexico won independence from Spain in 1821, after a 10-year revolution, but this did not quickly alter relations with us. For one thing, travel was difficult in the southern country. Also, Mexico was a much larger country than she is today. We sometimes looked upon her as a hostile neighbor, and she felt the same about us.

Texas was once a part of Mexico. In 1836, the Texans revolted and won their independence. Mexico was forced to give up territory that now makes up Texas—and parts of New Mexico, Kansas, and Colorado.

In 1845, Texas was made a U.S. state, and this angered the Mexican government. A quarrel arose with

Mexico over the question of the boundary between Texas and Mexico. The quarrel eventually led us to declare war on Mexico. In 1848, after two years of fighting, Mexico was forced to give up territory that is now California, Nevada, and Utah—as well as parts of Colorado, Wyoming, and New Mexico.

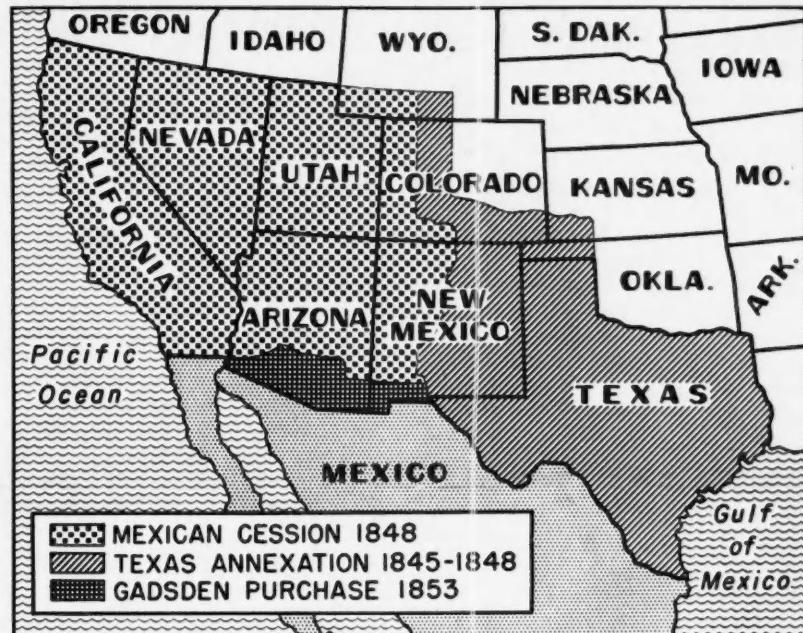
Even after the fighting ended, a boundary dispute remained. We settled this by buying a strip of land that is now part of Arizona and New Mexico. This acquisition in 1853 was called the Gadsden Purchase—after James Gadsden, U.S. minister to Mexico, who carried on the negotiations.

In all, we obtained an area of nearly 950,000 square miles from Mexico—or almost one third of the area that makes up the United States today. The Mexicans felt embittered about this for many years.

In the 1880's, Porfirio Diaz became dictator of Mexico. Diaz encouraged foreign businessmen to invest in Mexican oil fields, mines, and farm land. Some U.S. investors were attracted by the offers Diaz made, and began to do business in Mexico.

Diaz was overthrown in 1911 by Mexican revolutionaries. A period of disorder followed, and trouble developed with the United States. For a brief period in 1914, U.S. forces occupied Vera Cruz, an important port on the Gulf of Mexico.

In 1915, Pancho Villa appeared on the scene as a would-be political leader in northern Mexico. Villa actually was



DRAWN FOR THE AMERICAN OBSERVER BY JOHNSON

a bandit. He robbed in his own country and also crossed the frontier to make raids in the United States.

The Mexican government was unable to check Villa. So, in 1916-1917, the United States sent military forces into northern Mexico in an effort to capture the bandit. Our forces did not catch him. Then, with our entry into World War I, we turned our attention to the battle in Europe.

After 1920, our relations with Mexico began to improve. This was due, in part, to the actions of U.S. businessmen who operated oil refineries in the southern land. In 1938, however, the Mexican government took over the American-owned oil properties. This step brought about a U.S.

protest and led to bitter feelings. Eventually, though, the dispute was ironed out.

Mexico became an ally of the United States during World War II, and worked closely with us. She helped to guard against submarine attacks on shipping along coasts of the Americas. She supplied us with great quantities of raw materials.

Since the war, Mexico and the U.S. have worked out agreements for mutual defense of the two countries. Mexico often cooperates with us in foreign affairs, especially during sessions at the United Nations. There seems little doubt that our relations with Mexico now are on a sound, friendly footing.

The American Observer Semester Test

(Concluded from preceding page)

25. EDC proposes to (a) take over France's war in Indochina; (b) prevent the formation of a German army; (c) carry out all agreements reached at the Geneva Conference; (d) combine the defense forces of six nations in western Europe.

26. The Supreme Court has ruled that (a) evidence obtained by wire tapping may be used in the federal courts; (b) wire tapping is legal only in cases involving espionage and treason; (c) wire tapping may be carried on by any government official; (d) the U. S. Constitution does not forbid wire tapping.

27. With respect to our Indian population, most people are in agreement that (a) all special government controls should eventually be removed; (b) all

reservations should be abolished immediately; (c) no Indians should be expected to vote or pay taxes; (d) control over Indian affairs should be given to the individual states.

III. Completion. After the corresponding number on your answer sheet, write the word, name, or phrase that best completes each of the following items.

28. An important city of Turkey that lies partly in Europe and partly in Asia is _____.

29. The interests and welfare of our Indian population are now the responsibility of the _____ Department.

30. Most of the expenses of fighting the communists in Indochina are being paid by _____.

31. In the _____ elections, political parties select their candidates who will later compete in the "general" elections.

32. Egypt has tried for many years to gain control of the Suez Canal from _____.

33. The governors of Alaska and Hawaii are appointed by the _____.

34. The only state which permits 18-year-olds to vote is _____.

35. The three states of Viet Nam, Laos, and Cambodia form the country of _____.

IV. Places in the News. Find the location of each of the following places on the adjoining map, and write the number of that location after the proper item number on your answer sheet.

36. The government of this Central American country is dominated by communists and pro-Reds.

37. About three fourths of the world's canned pineapple comes from this territory.

38. After World War I, Kemal Ataturk turned this land into a modern nation.

39. The Nile River is vital to the welfare of this nation.

40. India is displeased over our program to send military aid to this country.

41. This country leads the world in wool output.

42. This British colony in Africa is moving rapidly toward self-rule.

43. Puerto Rican Nationalists were responsible for a recent attack on lawmakers in this city.

44. This country leads the rest of the world in population.

45. This South American nation is a leading producer of wheat and meat.

46. This country is the main east-west battleground in Southeast Asia.

47. Russia and the free nations have not yet agreed on a peace treaty for this European nation.

48. Because it is so close to Russia, this U. S. territory is a valuable military base.

49. This island republic of Southeast Asia used to be Dutch territory.

50. An important diplomatic conference began here April 26.

